

# Foreword

The most significant and positive result from the acrimonious eighth battle of Manassas, which concluded in 1988 with the addition of 560 acres of land to Manassas National Battlefield Park at the cost of nearly \$130 million, was heightened national interest in preservation and interpretation of our country's historic battlefields, particularly those associated with the Civil War. This led to two significant actions by the United States government.

In late November 1990, President George Bush signed into law legislation forwarded by the 101st Congress establishing the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC). The Commission was to identify the nation's historically significant Civil War sites; determine their relative importance; determine their condition; assess threats to their integrity; and recommend alternatives for their preservation and interpretation. That same year, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Jr. created the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), which was to be administered by the National Park Service. The ABPP's mission was to provide leadership on the federal level in building private-public partnerships that resulted in battlefield preservation without involving federal land purchases.

In 1993, the CWSAC submitted its report to Congress and disbanded. Since that time, the American Battlefield Protection Program has administered and monitored the CWSAC's recommendations. More importantly, the ABPP has continued to provide leadership and coordination in building partnerships by bringing together diverse constituencies throughout the nation in the interest of battlefield preservation and interpretation. It has also been a catalyst for the burgeoning interest in heritage tourism and traveling Americans' long romance with the Civil War, its significance, personae, and personalities.

The ABPP is not a "big buck" government program. With a small sum of federal seed money—never more than \$750,000 in a fiscal year—it has succeeded in generating projects valued at millions of dollars that have given impetus to the protection, preservation, and interpretation of battlefields in 20 states and the District of Columbia.

As a federal employee for nearly half a century, first in the Marine Corps and then in the National Park Service, I have seen few, if any, federal programs that are as cost effective and constructive as the American Battlefield Protection Program. The following essays, I trust, will inspire the reader to share my enthusiasm for the program.

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